PORPOISE BAY PARK
MASTER PLAN

Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing
Park Operations Branch
Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division
North Vancouver, B.C.

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PORPOISE BAY PROVINCIAL PARK

MASTER PLAN

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This Master Plan for Porpoise Bay Provincial Park

is submitted for your approval.

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Regional Director

APPROVED: G. Trachuk, Director — May 4/81 Date

RECOMMENDED: F.P. Delikatny, District Manager — Jan 9/1981 Date

RECOMMENDED: G.F. Macnab, Manager — Apr. 30 1981 Date

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A. INTRODUCTION

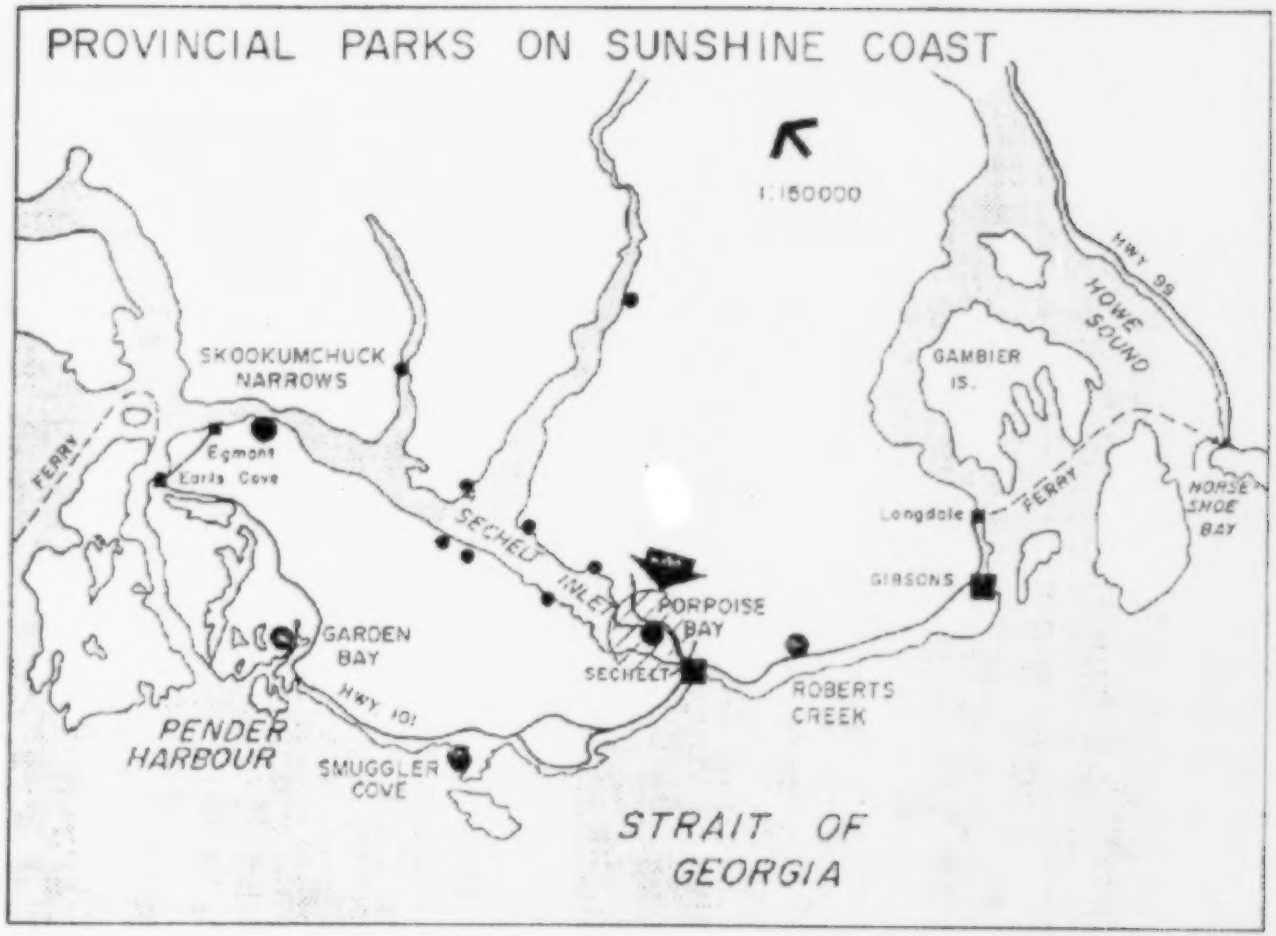
Porpoise Bay Provincial Park, Class 'A', Category 6, is situated on the east shore of Sechelt Inlet, 6 kilometres north of the town of Sechelt, approximately 80 kilometres north of Vancouver. (Figure 1) Porpoise Bay is the largest developed provincial park on the Sunshine Coast. Several other provincial parks are in the area but offer no comparable facilities. Roberts Creek contains 24 campsites and has a small picnic area on the ocean; Smuggler Cove is a marine park with trail access only from Highway #101; Garden Bay Provincial Park near Pender Harbour is currently underdeveloped and Skookumchuk Narrows Park simply offers trail access to a viewing area at the rapids.

In addition to day use by the residents of the Sunshine Coast, Porpoise Bay Provincial Park serves as both a destination area for Lower Mainland campers and a stopping-off point for tourists making the loop to Comox. When the marine-access Recreation Area on Sechelt Inlets is developed, this park will also be a natural staging point for small boaters and canoeists. Porpoise Bay Park has an area of 61 hectares.

1. Background

The term "Sunshine Coast" was derived from an early resident who described the area as lying in the "Sunshine Belt". In the 1920's, in an effort to increase business, the Union Steamship Company applied the term to their passenger runs along the northeastern shore of the Gulf of Georgia from Vancouver to Powell River. The area is aptly named as the Sunshine Coast and does, in fact, receive more hours of sunshine than any other area on the west coast of Canada.

Porpoise Bay Provincial Park is unique to the Sunshine Coast. Protected from major tides and winds, it offers solitude in an area close to a large urban centre. Separated from the Strait of Georgia by the isthmus of Sechelt, the waters of the Inlet warm from the ambiance of sun, gentle tides and the general physical protection in the area.


PROVINCIAL PARKS ON SUNSHINE COAST
1:150000
SKOOKUMCHUCK NARROWS
FERRY
Egmont
Earls Cove
SECHELT INLET
GAMBIER IS.
HWY 99
HOWE SOUND
FERRY
Langdale
HORSE SHOE BAY
GIBSONS
PORPOISE BAY
SECHELT
GARDEN BAY
HWY 101
PENDER HARBOUR
SMUGGLER COVE
ROBERTS CREEK
STRAIT OF GEORGIA

The Sechelt Indian Band frequented the area with a major village at Sechelt itself. At the turn of this century, the white man's interest in the area heightened, and in the early 1900's, the Crowston family homesteaded the east side of Sechelt Inlet. The park was purchased from the Crowston's in 1966 and on January 29, 1971, Porpoise Bay Provincial Park was established by Order-in-Council No. 357.

2. Existing Land Use

Present park development (Figure 2) includes 89 campsites and day use parking for approximately 300 cars. A pleasant man-made beach faces west to Sechelt Inlet while an interpretive trail system runs past Angus Creek, a salt marsh and a pastoral section of the park's second growth forest.

Access to the park is via the Tillicum Bay Highway, north of Sechelt. Public information is available on the Type I information shelter just inside the park gates. Day use traffic is monitored by a buried automatic counter on the beach access road past the campground entrance road. Sewerage from the main offices, sani-station and public toilets throughout the park are serviced on a pump-out basis, as no septic field areas are available.

The provision of wood is from a single woodlot located near the service yard. Water is pumped from the service yard well, east under the highway then up a hill to a 25,000 gallon holding tank. This water supply provides gravity-fed fresh water for the park.

Although there are no boating facilities at Porpoise Bay, the day use area is frequented by many recreationists who carry their car top boats for launching at the beach area. The boaters, primarily fishermen wanting to try their luck in the two deep areas adjacent to the park, use the south end of the beach to launch their craft, conflicting minimally with swimmers.

For people wishing to launch larger boats into the Inlet, there are three sites available near the park. The Federal Government provides free boat launching and marinas, one approximately 2 kilometres south and one approximately 4 kilometres north of the park where boats may be put in and extracted for a fee.

EXISTING DEVELOPMENT

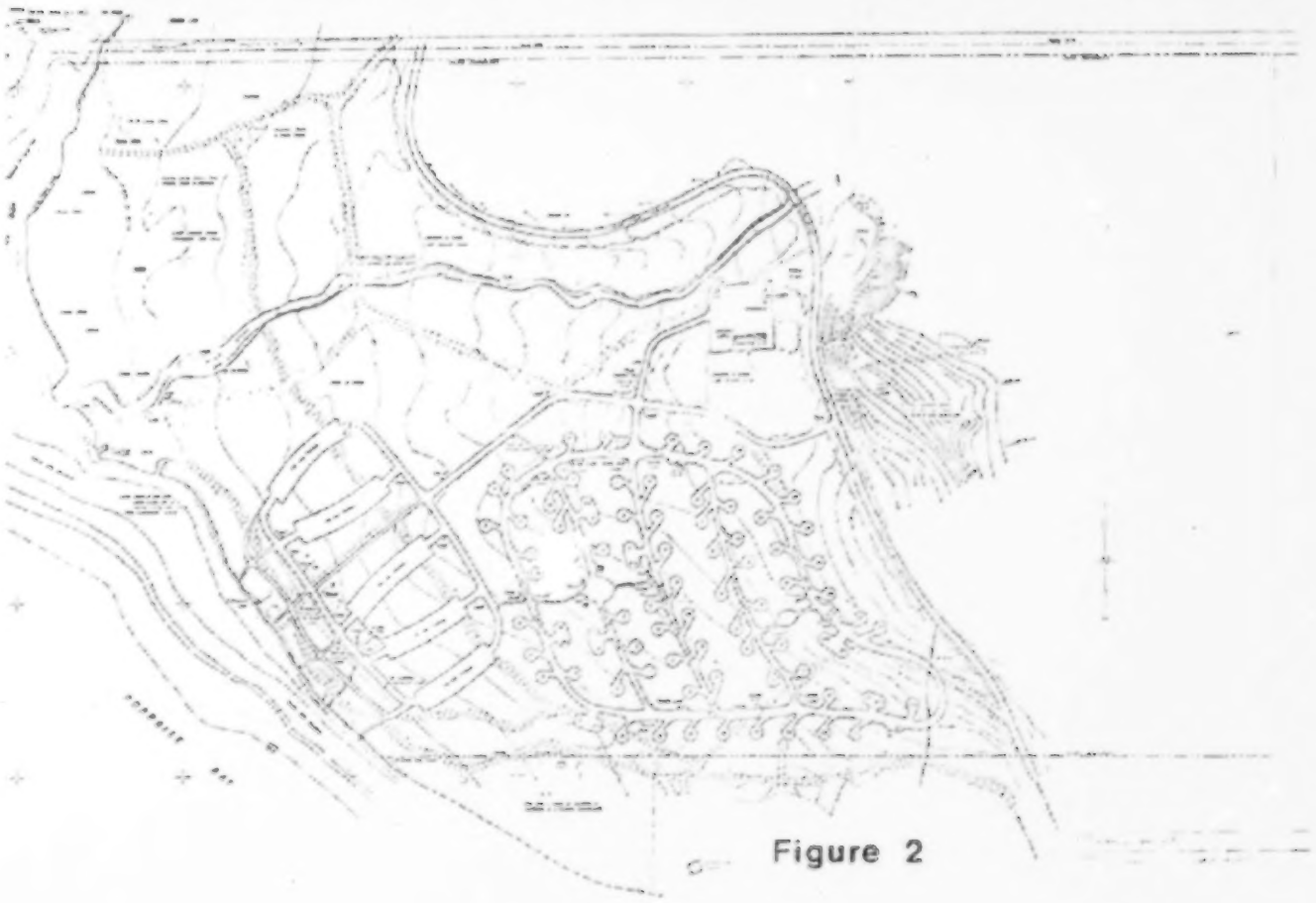


Figure 2

Adjacent to the park and to the north and to the east, gravel extraction is taking place. The high use areas of the park are well screened visually from these operations, however, the noise of equipment and machinery working at night has disturbed many campers.

To the south, a private campground has recently been subdivided for a residential development. A sturdy chain-link fence along this boundary of the park, coupled with existing vegetative screening precludes conflicts here.

3. Park Use

The number of campers visiting Porpoise Bay Provincial Park has been increasing each year since 1976. (Table 1) The peak season of 1979 saw one of the five day-use parking areas turned into a temporary overflow campground for self-contained units. Numerous complaints have been received by park staff about the lack of available camping sites.

Lack of facilities for organized groups has been a problem noted in recent years. Large groups of cyclists have arrived without notice expecting to find accommodation and have had no alternate place to go.

The conversion of the adjacent private campsite to a residential subdivision has contributed to increased park use and has underlined the need for continued public sector involvement in the provision of camping opportunities in the Sechelt Peninsula.

3. Park Use - (continued)

Campground use increased by 2,431 user days (49%) in 1979 over 1978 totals while day use has decreased by 4,241 users or -29%. Although the weather was pleasant, the park drew more campers than day users in 1979. The 89 campsites in the park are complemented by 25 day use tables in the beach area. The five day use parking lots, capable of holding 280 cars, are rarely near capacity.

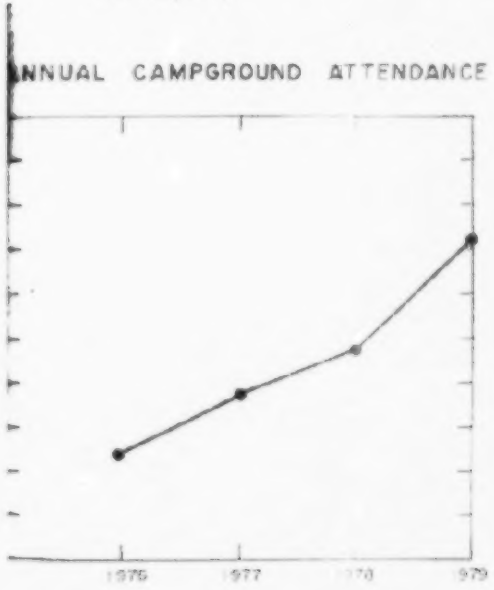


TABLE 1

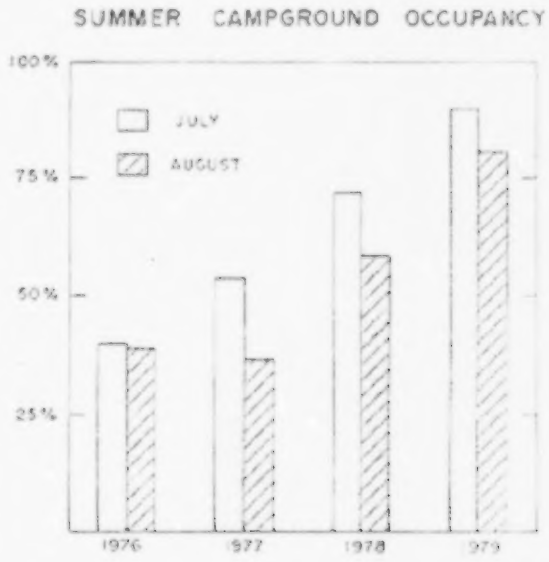


TABLE 2

4. Demand

Recreation is a significant factor in the future development of the Sunshine Coast. Four of the five goals of the Sunshine Coast Regional District's 1979 Regional Plan, relate specifically to the enhancement of recreational potential of the Region. There are 21 policy statements within these goals and almost 1/3 of these policies relate directly to: the provision of recreation areas; the retention and enhancement of the scenic and recreational values of the area; protection of natural areas to maintain the beauty of the region; and areas for recreational vehicle and recreational cottage accommodation. Area development policies provide for "tourist commercial areas" and "recreational areas." The recreational areas include Parks and Green Belt areas.

There is an increase in visitation to the Sunshine Coast annually with the summer vacation months showing the greatest increase in traffic volumes. Annual increments in traffic are expected to continue at 8% to 10% according to the B.C. Ferry Corporation.

Porpoise Bay campground, the only large destination campground in the area, is now regularly seeing capacity use. In view of the projected general demand for recreation opportunities throughout the Lower Mainland Region, it appears that the existing campground capacity will not meet the future demand.

Increased recreational activity on the Sunshine Coast includes a marina development proposed for Francis Peninsula by Pender Harbour; a proposed marina for Gibsons (municipally operated); and a 60-unit campground at Wilson Creek (private development) to be constructed for use in 1980.

The only other provincial park in which campground development is envisioned is at Garden Bay. The park is relatively small and it is unlikely that more than 50 campsites are feasible there.

B STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

It is the purpose of the Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division, along with the Sunshine Coast Regional District and other Provincial and Federal agencies to provide a diverse recreation system offering varied outdoor opportunities for both tourists and local residents on the Sunshine Coast.

As such, the primary goal of Porpoise Bay Provincial Park is to encourage and provide transient and destination park opportunities in a scenic and sheltered marine setting for both area residents and visitors. The secondary goal is to act as a staging area for the Sechelt Inlets Recreation Area.

Porpoise Bay Park will be managed to provid e this intensive recreational use in a manner consistent with the sheltered and tranquil atmosphere of Porpoise Bay.

C. PARK RESOURCES STATEMENT

Porpoise Bay lies within the Coastal Douglas fir Biogeoclimatic zone and encompasses the sandy delta of Angus Creek.

PHOTOGRAPH NOT AVAILABLE

PHOTOGRAPH NOT AVAILBALE

The tidal salt marsh at Angus Creek attracts a variety of waterbirds including the common loon, western grebe, surf scooters and golden eye. The creek itself is an important spawning area on the Sechelt Inlets.

C. PARK RESOURCES STATEMENT - continued

The south-west facing "man-made" warm water beach serves a large number of day users. Swimming and beach play are the most common activities.

PHOTOGRAPH NOT AVAILABLE

PHOTOGRAPH NOT
for the park

The diversity of the tidal area creates AVAILABLE an interpretive theme centering upon intertidal flora and fauna as well as beach processes.

C. PARK RESOURCES STATEMENT - continued

The upland area has been developed for picnicking and grass play.

PHOTOGRAPH NOT AVAILABLE

PHOTOGRAPH NOT AVAILABLE

Camping opportunities exist at over eighty campsites. Figure 3 shows the existing features for the park.

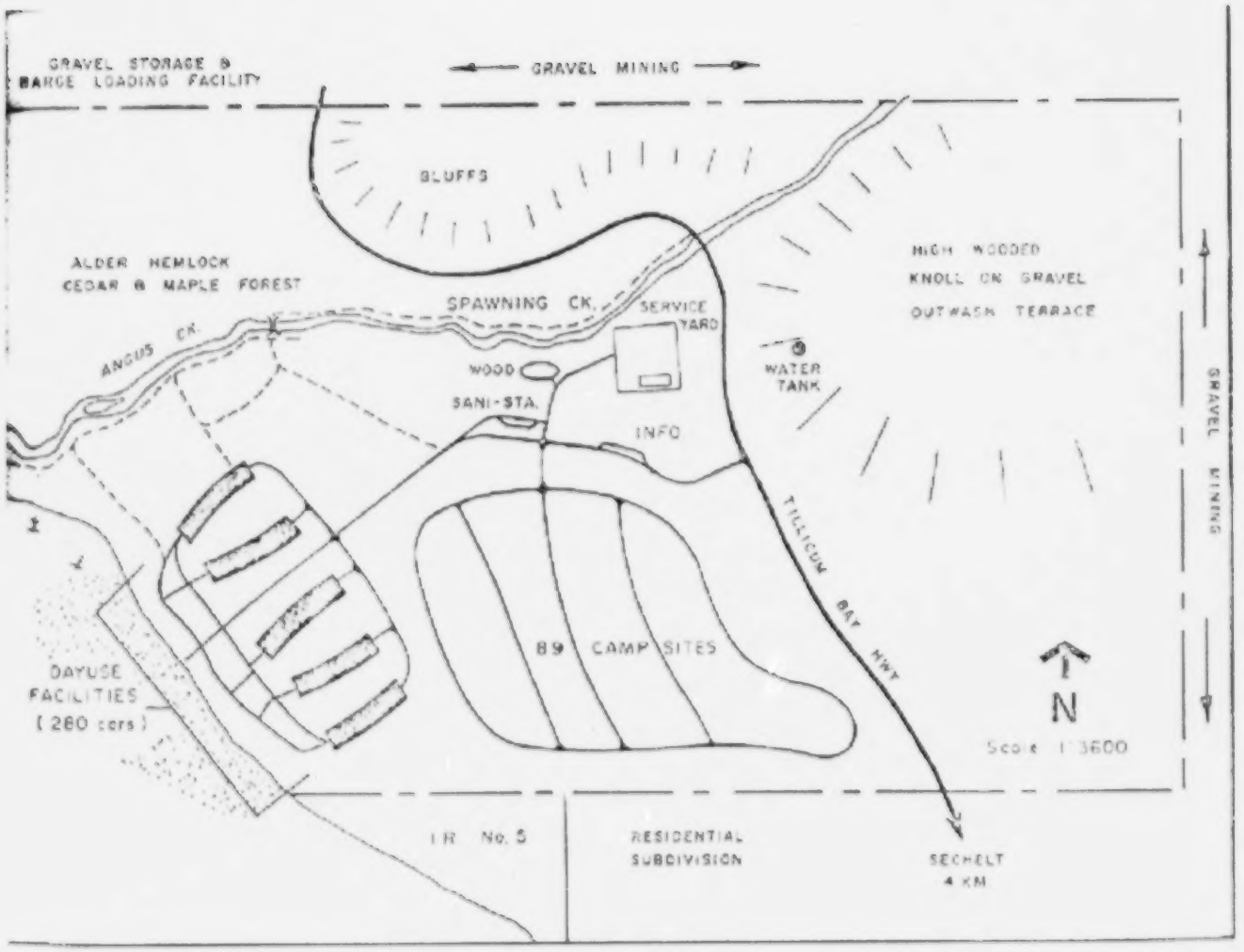
D. ZONING

Figure 4 illustrates the zoning plan for this park. The **Development Zone** includes the area where construction of facilities is necessary to enhance or enable public recreation for camping, picnicking, or walking. Current development is shown on Figure 2.

The **Interpretation Zone** is generally that area encompassing Angus Creek and its mouth. The salt marsh and the Creek itself will form the major component of the interpretive program in the park.

The **Service Zone**, located in the eastern portion of the park and consisting of the service yard, includes the area needed for park management.

The **Natural Zone** covers almost half of the park. This zone generally has no development and serves as a buffer from the industrial activity to the north of the park.


GRAVEL STORAGE & BARGE LOADING FACILITY
GRAVEL MINING
BLUFFS
ALDER HEMLOCK CEDAR & MAPLE FOREST
HIGH WOODED KNOLL ON GRAVEL OUTWASH TERRACE
SPAWNING CK.
SERVICE YARD
ANGUS CK.
WOOD
WATER TANK
SANI-STA.
INFO
TILLICUM BAY HWY
GRAVEL MINING
89 CAMP SITES
DAYUSE FACILITIES (260 cars)
N
Scale 1:3600
I.R. No. 5
RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISION
SECHELT 4 KM

E. GENERAL MANAGEMENT STATEMENT

Overall management of Porpoise Bay Provincial Park will come under the Garibaldi District Office, with specific park management procedures emanating from the park itself.

F. SPECIFIC MANAGEMENT PLANS

1. Resource Management

Resource management will entail maintenance of the natural areas within the park for visitor observation and enjoyment. The salmon fishery in Angus Creek will be monitored in close conjunction with the Federal Fisheries staff to assure the redevelopment and maintenance of a significant spawning area for chum salmon. In 1978 a slide deposited approximately four feet of gravel and debris into the creek. The resulting siltation smothered eggs and fry in the stream at that time and has greatly reduced the number of returning spawners. Federal Fisheries staff feel that the stream will cleanse itself naturally through normal seasonal water fluctuations.

Trails in the park will be maintained including a boardwalk trail through the inter-tidal marsh for an interpretation walk.

The beach area will be monitored for sand shift and loss with modifications of regrading or resanding to be carried out periodically.

2. Visitor Management Plans

The park will be managed for intensive recreation activities. In view of existing development and use patterns, there is a need for a better balance between over-night and day use facilities.

The campground has been experiencing increasingly heavy demand in recent years. Management should allow for expansion of the vehicle camping area into two of the five parking lots in the day use area and the conversion of one other parking lot into a group camping area. (Figure 5)

The interpretive program should be expanded and a new amphitheatre and on-site signs constructed dealing with the important natural and cultural history features.

3. Administration Plans

The park is administered by the Sunshine Coast headquarters at Porpoise Bay Park which is under the overall administration of the Garibaldi District office at Alice Lake.

The service yard at the park contains the office and maintenance complex.

3 Interpretive Plans

The extent of the interpretive development to occur will be decided largely by the Lower Mainland Interpretive Plan which is to be completed later this year. In accordance with the work done on that plan to date, the interpretive themes for the park will center upon the interpretation of the inter-tidal flora and fauna of the Sechelt Inlet, the life-cycles associated with Angus Creek, and the history of the Sechelt Indians.

F. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Implementation of necessary development should take place as follows:

1. The first priority will be the improvement of the sanitary facilities through construction of two service buildings complete with showers.

2. The second priority will be given to the development of an extended interpretive program. This will include:
   (i) a mini-amphitheatre
   (ii) kiosk display for interpretation, information and fishery display
   (iii) improved hiking trail along Angus Creek
   (iv) development of a trail through the intertidal marsh area to connect with existing trails in the park.

3. The third priority will be given to the development of the additional overnight campsites and the group camping area.